

Blockades Key Messages – February 17, 2022

Opening

- Good afternoon.
- I will begin to sound like a broken record, but I will likely start every update with a caveat: I respectfully ask that there is no onward sharing of operational details.
- While some details may seem innocuous, please keep in mind that they are tied to a larger operational and/or investigative context. This includes operational planning details and actions pursued under the new temporary Emergencies Act measures.
- This is especially critical for Ottawa as we progress quickly on our phased plan over the next few days. I would also stress the importance of there being no public commentary on policing plans and/or response until we have things resolved.
- On that note, today's update will primarily focus on Ottawa, as the situation in areas like Windsor, Emerson, and Coutts are status quo. I'll be sure to brief up promptly should there be a change in any of these areas.
- Though I will take a moment to briefly note that the protestors that have arrived at the North Portal port of entry in Saskatchewan were successfully relocated by our team to an alternate site on private land for a peaceful protest. The port remains open; traffic is flowing freely.

[APG]

Ottawa Update

- The operation in Ottawa, as detailed yesterday, is moving ahead.
- We have nearly completed the first phase – that of stabilization. The City and policing partners have pulled together the necessary equipment and resources for this operation, including towing needs, and street blockage.
- Protestors in Ottawa have been warned they need to leave the area now. They have been clearly informed that those blocking streets, or assisting others in blocking streets are committing a criminal act and may be arrested.
- In tandem with efforts to take control of the downtown core, reduce numbers and prevent others from coming to join, we are hardening the centre. This includes creating and blocking off areas. It's anticipated that the interdiction zone will be fully blockaded and guarded by 2PM today.
- I can't give specifics but what I can tell you that it spans from Somerset at the south side, to the river at its north, and while the East and West have fluctuations, it goes as far east as King Edward, and almost to Booth street.
- We have 14 public order units that are ready to clear this city starting tomorrow. The focus until then is to continue to get the less entrenched individuals and vehicles out of the red zone.
- The goal remains to end this situation peacefully; officers are facilitating the departure of anyone who wants to leave.
- For those who refuse, officers have appropriate and lawful measures to remove them.
- Child protective services staff are secured and ready to ensure that children are protected and cared for during any action.
- While we hope to avoid it at all costs, I want to be clear that there is a possibility of physical interactions between protesters and the police. This will be a heavy tactical operation and things may turn violent.

[APG]

- There are indications of additional convoys heading to Ottawa. One was stopped by the OPP last night and relocated to an approved location in Embrun. We continue to closely monitor the situation and information sharing among all policing partners is strong.
- Communications strategies informing the public are well underway. A press conference took place earlier today with a focus on providing the reassurance and necessary cautions to the public in the downtown core. This includes messaging such as to shelter in place, close windows and doors, etc.
- I have full confidence in the Ottawa Police Service, under the leadership of Interim Chief Bell, as well as in all the deployed officers working collaboratively to achieve effective operational results, with the minimum amount of physical interaction possible.

If pressed

- At this point, no decision has been taken to seek my Minister's approval to designate any part of Ottawa per the Emergencies Act measures.

[APG]

Compelling Services

- As you know, additional measures under the Emergencies Act provide for the compelling of necessary goods and services, such as specialized tow trucks.
- Today, I am delegating the new requisition powers in the regulations to key RCMP members across the country so they can compel needed goods and services, such as specialized tow trucks, with compensation.
- I have also delegated these powers to the Commissioner of the OPP, and those authorized to act on his behalf, as requested by the OPP Commissioner.
- I have not yet received a request from my counterpart in the Sûreté du Québec, but will do the same if requested.
- In doing so, these powers will be available to police across the country, including, as of today here in Ottawa. The RCMP will pay the costs, or reimburse other police forces such as the OPP where they use these powers.
- My team and I recognize the urgency of this situation, and are able to cash manage any financial pressures in the short-term.
- It does however expose the RCMP to significant liability should something go wrong across the country.
- I trust that the Government will have our back and ensure we are appropriately resourced and supported given these risks, including potential future litigation.

[APG]

Emergency Economic Measure Order – Banks

- I am pleased to report that 18 disclosures have been made to date to banks, the Canadian Bankers Association and Credit Unions – this includes 14 individuals and four vehicles.
- One (1) disclosure has been received from the banks.
- BMO is freezing the account of one individual identified by the RCMP.
- In addition, there has been one proactive disclosure on an entity – account is frozen.

[APG]

Other Sites

Windsor

- Situation is status quo from yesterday – the Ambassador Bridge remains open.

Coutts

- Demonstrators departed yesterday.
- The port of entry remains open; no change in status from yesterday.

Emerson

- Port is open; there is passenger and vehicle access.

British Columbia

- The border is flowing freely.

[APG]